

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH-EAST

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Abstract

The South-East of Nigeria has earned a reputation as the hot bed of separatist agitation championed by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). With a capacity to mount vigorous and relentless campaign for Biafran separatist identity fueled by the fact of Igbo marginalization and exclusion by the Nigerian state, and latching on to the legitimacy crisis faced by the governments in the South-East and the open as well as the veiled threats of use of force as a strategy to enforce its directives, IPOB has effectively established itself as a force to reckon with not only in the region but beyond. The capacity of the organization to issue directives and have them complied with, has clothed it with the toga of a de facto political authority. This paper investigates the acts, pronouncements and posturing of IPOB and their implications for the political authority of the governments in the South-East. Employing the doctrine of sovereignty as the explanatory tool and the qualitative method of data collection and analysis, the paper finds that the acts and pronouncements of IPOB such as the establishment and effective use of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) and its sit-at-home directives, have posed a challenge to and indeed threatened the political authority of governments in the South-East. The paper recommends among others, that the governments in the region should identify with the problems and yearnings of their people with a view to shoring up their legitimacy and effective exercise of political authority.

Keywords: IPOB, political authority, south-east, separatist agitation, legitimacy crisis

Introduction

The South-East of Nigeria has earned a reputation as the hotbed of separatist agitation currently championed by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). But this is by no means suggesting that the region as presently constituted is the starting point of separatist agitation in Nigeria or that IPOB as a body first championed it. The urge for separatism was first expressed in 1914 when Northern Nigeria displeased with its amalgamation with the southern part in that year, threatened to leave the union (Tamuno, as cited in Abada, Omeh & Okoye, 2020). Subsequently at other periods, there were either threats to secede or real attempts at doing so by some aggrieved groups and entities in Nigeria. For instance, while the Northern region in 1953 merely issued a threat of secession as a fallout from the attack on its representatives in the House of Representatives by mobs in Lagos over their opposition to the self-government motion moved by Chief Anthony Enahoro, the Eastern Region in 1967 actually made an attempt to secede by the declaration of Republic of Biafra which led to a 30-month bloody civil war (Okoye & Chukwurah, 2022; Achebe, 2012; Ademoyega, 1981; Madiebo, 1980; Forsyth, 1977).

Separatist agitations in Nigeria as in other climes are usually organized within the framework of organizations. In the context of Nigeria, such organizations as the O'odua Peoples Congress (OPC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Arewa Peoples Congress (APC), Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), among others, have led one separatist agitation or another. Notably, while some have fizzled out or gone underground, a few others such as IPOB have endured. The case of IPOB which has been in existence since 2012 is of particular interest. Prior to its formation, there had been in existence several Biafran separatist movements in Nigeria and in the Diaspora which include but not limited to MASSOB

formed in 1999, Biafra Foundation (BF), Biafra Actualization Forum (BAF), Igbo USA, Ekwe Nche, Biafra Nigeria World (BNW) and Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) (Onuoha, Ochuba, Onuoha & Ani, 2021). While it is not correct to say that the foregoing organizations did not make any mark in the pursuit of their avowed goal of Biafran separatism, yet it is IPOB more than any others, that has made the most impact and taken the quest to a radical new height (Onuoha *et al.*, 2021; Sobechi, 2017; Adibe, 2017; Ibeanu, Orji & Iwuamadi, 2016). Apart from its activities and pronouncements, IPOB has an organizational structure and apparatuses that could be regarded as quasi-governmental in nature. An important component of the structure is the Germany-based 15-member Directorate of State (DOS) being the foremost decision-making arm. The DOS has under it, regional representatives in Asia, Europe, North America and Africa. Back home in Nigeria, there are state co-ordinators as well as co-ordinators for the zones and local government areas in the South-East and South-South States (Nwangwu, 2023). Of significance also is the establishment of a paramilitary outfit known as the Eastern Security Network (ESN) (Nwangwu, 2023). It is thus not surprising that the organization more than others before it, attracted the attention of not only the Federal Government but that of the state governments in the region (Onuoha *et al.*, 2021; Abada *et al.*, 2020; Jacob, Nwobi & Igbo, 2020).

With a capacity to mount vigorous and relentless campaign for Biafran separatism fueled by the fact of Igbo marginalization and exclusion by the Nigerian state, and latching on to the legitimacy crisis faced by the governments in the South-East and the open as well as the veiled threats of use of force as a strategy to enforce its directives, IPOB has effectively established itself as a force to reckon with not only in the region but beyond. The capacity of the organization to issue directives and have them complied with, has clothed it with the toga of a *de facto* political authority.

This paper investigates the acts, pronouncements and posturing of IPOB and their implications for the political authority of the governments in the South-East.

Conceptual framework

Political Authority

The concept of authority has become ubiquitous and popular because of its indispensability in human, social and political relationships. One of the earliest scholarly contributions on the subject is that by Max Weber who defined authority as legitimate forms of domination. (Weber, 1968). Wolff (1990, p.20) defines it as “the right to command and correlatively, the right to be obeyed.” Generally, authority connotes the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce compliance. Its exercise cuts across all spheres involving human relationships. Such include but not limited to the social, religious/ecclesiastical, institutional and political spheres. In the theory and practice of politics, the issue of authority alongside that of power features prominently as a recurring decimal. This is expected given that the state through its agent, the government, cannot carry out its will effectively without the possession of the properties of authority and power. It is within this context that the idea of political authority is appreciated.

According to Wikipedia (2023a), “political authority describes any of the moral principles legitimizing differences between individuals' rights and duties by virtue of their relationship with the state.” It bestows on the functionaries of a government the right to rule over others using coercion where necessary, while also imposing an obligation for the citizens to obey government orders (Wikipedia, 2023a).

Huemer (2013), sees political authority as a hypothesized moral property on the basis of which governments may coerce people in certain ways not permitted to anyone else, and on the basis of which citizens must obey governments in contexts they would not be obligated to obey anyone else. He identifies two aspects of political authority:

- i. Political legitimacy which is the right of a government to make laws and enforce them by coercion against the members of its society. This in essence, is the right to rule.
- ii. Political obligation which is the obligation incumbent on the citizens to obey their government even in situations in which they would not be duty-bound to obey similar commands issued by a non-governmental agent.

The implications of Huemer's view are that political authority can only be legitimately exercised by the government or any of its agents and that citizens are under an obligation to obey and abide by commands, laws and directives from government unquestioningly.

Laudemore (2011) argues that political authority is a distinct form of authority by contrast, for example, with parental or divine authority in the sense that it is historically attached to the power of governments and their various extensions such as the laws, officials, courts, the police, etc). It is also a specie of the larger category of practical authority which includes parental or divine authority.

There are two notions of political authority which are political authority as a normative notion or morally legitimate authority and political authority as a non-normative notion or *de facto* authority (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2012). The state has political authority in the descriptive or normative sense when it maintains public order and issues commands and makes rules that are generally obeyed by subjects because many of them believe it has authority in the normative sense (Hart as cited in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2012). The normative notion of political authority is normally associated with the idea of legitimate political authority and this type of authority is the property of constitutional and democratic governments. Political authority in the non-normative or *de facto* sense refers to the capacity of a person or group of persons to maintain public order and secure the obedience of most people by issuing commands backed by sanctions. Here, the subjects must not think of the authority as a legitimate one (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2012). It could be exercised by unconstitutional regimes such as the military or by groups whose authority is not backed by law.

Theoretical Foundation

This paper is anchored on the doctrine of sovereignty as the explanatory tool. Although a lot of political theorists have made profound contributions in expounding the frontiers of the doctrine, the credit for first using and defining the term goes to Jean Bodin who in his *Six Books on the Republic* (1576) used the term *souverainete* that came to have its English equivalent in the word 'sovereignty' (Johari, 2010, p.108). In the words of Bodin, "sovereignty is the supreme power of the state over citizens and subjects unrestrained by law" (Johari, 2010, p.108).

The doctrine of sovereignty is to the effect that a state enjoys supreme authority over its territory (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2020). This supreme authority of the state has two dimensions: internal and external. The idea of sovereignty in the internal sphere means that the state has highest power within the territorial space under its control. All people and their associations are under the control of the state. Practically, it signifies power of the state to make and enforce a law throughout its territory. The ultimate power to command and enforce obedience resides in the state (Johari, 2010). Thus, there can be no other authority claiming equality with the state or sharing the governance and control of the internal space with it. The external dimension of sovereignty is to the effect that the state is not beholding to any external power or authority in the conduct of its affairs.

The idea of sovereignty as the supreme authority of the state over its territory is imbued with the notion of the state having unquestionable political authority to direct its affairs. Given that the government is the agent of the state for the purpose of enforcing its sovereign will, there may seem to be difficulty in ascertaining in a federal system of government, whether the sovereign political authority is vested solely in the federal government or is shared between the center and the federating units. In the case

of a unitary system of government, it is fairly easy to locate this authority in the central government but this cannot be said of the federal system. This is so because in a federal system, the powers of the government are divided between a central government (national or federal) on the one hand and provincial (regional or constituent) governments on the other (Johari, 2010). However, it needs to be pointed out that a cardinal feature of sovereignty is that the sovereign powers of the state cannot be divided (Johari, 2010, p.111). What normally obtains in a federal system is the constitutional distribution of governmental powers between the center and the constituent units and not division of sovereignty. As Gettel as cited in Johari (2010, p.111) puts it, “What is divided in a federal system is not sovereignty which resides as a unit in the state as a whole, but the exercise of its various powers which are distributed in accordance with a constitutional system among various governmental organs.”

What follows from the foregoing is that the sovereign political authority of the state is exercised by the center and the constituent units according to the measure of powers assigned to each level by the constitution. Any threat or challenge to the exercise of this authority by any level of government is tantamount to a challenge to the sovereign authority of the state.

The relevance of the preceding discourse to the paper is that the entire territory of Nigeria is under the sovereign authority of the Nigerian state. The fact of Nigeria operating a federal system with a constitutional division of powers between the federal government and the states does not detract from the principle of indivisibility of its sovereignty. It is accepted that both the federal government and state governments are mere agents of the Nigerian state for the purpose of enforcing its sovereign political authority in their respective spheres. As in the case of the federal government, any threat or challenge to the exercise of political authority by any or some of the state governments, constitutes a threat to the effective exercise of the sovereign authority of the Nigerian state in those states. It is in the light of this that IPOB's acts and pronouncements in the South-East is appreciated.

Emergence of IPOB: A Brief Historical Sketch

Sequel to the end of the civil war in 1970, the federal military government of Yakubu Gowon committed itself to implementing the programme of Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (3Rs). This programme was targeted at the defunct Eastern Region, majorly dominated by the Igbo ethnic group, that had been mobilized under the Republic of Biafra for the actualization of the failed secession agenda. However, decades down the line, nothing about the existential realities of the Igbo people in Nigeria indicates that the programme was not a mere political rhetoric (Ibeanu et al., 2016). There have been cries of marginalization and exclusion of the Igbos by successive governments (Ibeanu et al., 2016). Chukwuma (2012, p.viii) vividly captures the Igbo predicament thus,

...the Federal Government of Nigeria, since the end of the civil war in 1970 has not been fair to the South-East in rebuilding its infrastructure and services destroyed during the civil war, which would have enabled the region to rebuild its economy and provide jobs for its army of young people. The government has consistently shortchanged the region in the sitting of major public works programmes such as construction of power stations, expansion of road networks, water and irrigation projects and other social investment that would have contributed in turning the economy around.

The perceived marginalization and victimization of the Igbos encouraged the resurgence of neo-Biafra separatist movements (Ibeanu et al., 2016; Alumona et al., n.d.). The emergence of the Ralph Uwazuruike-led MASSOB in 1999 shortly after the inauguration of civilian rule was an expression of this urge (Owen, 2016). MASSOB has the aim of actualizing an independent state of Biafra through non-violent means (Alumona, Azom & Iloh, n.d.). The organization's quest for Biafran separatist identity soon

brought it into confrontations with the Federal Government which through its security agencies, descended heavily on the members and supporters by their arrests, trials, convictions and even death (Alumona et al., n.d.). However, apart from state repression, MASSOB was severely weakened by the leadership in-fighting which pitched Uwazuruike against one of his lieutenants, Benjamin Igwe Onwuka who later left to form one of the splinter groups, the Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) (Ezea, as cited in Nwangwu, 2023; Amanambu, 2017). Among the allegations leveled against Uwazuruike was that he was hobnobbing with the “mainstream Nigerian politics” (Wikipedia, 2023b; Jacob et al., 2020). The Onwuka-led BZM was soon to go under owing to the incessant arrests and trials of the leading members of the organization by Nigerian security agencies (Wikipedia, 2023b). The failure of MASSOB and BZM to effectively drive the Biafran separatist agenda provided the fertile ground for the emergence of the Nnamdi Kanu-led IPOB in 2012.

IPOB emerged to continue the movement championed by MASSOB (Wikipedia, 2023b). Like its forebears, the organization set for itself, the goal of achieving an independent state of Biafra preferably through non-violent means specifically through referendum. However, in contrast to conservative Igbo nationalists' preference for dialogue and diplomacy, IPOB symbolizes the militant arm of post-civil war Igbo nationalism which aligns with the secessionist inclination that surged since the return of civilian governance in 1999 (Nwangwu, 2023). Its target audience is predominantly “the alienated underclass of mainly Igbo descent” (Nwangwu, 2023) who were reached by its leader through his online radio broadcasts on Radio Biafra. It has consistently lampooned the Nigerian federal government for its poor investment, political alienation, inequitable resource distribution, marginalization of the Igbos, heavy military presence and extrajudicial killings in the South-East (Wikipedia, 2023b). Although IPOB shares similarity of objectives with others before it, it has been able to take the quest for Biafran separatism to a radical new height and in the process, attracted local and international attention through its brand of agitation, in a manner unequalled by others. As Onuoha et al, (2020, p.550) rightly observed,

Among the separatist movements in Nigeria since the end of the civil war, none has generated the kind of debate, attention (both within and outside Nigeria) and federal government's reactions like that of IPOB. The IPOB separatist movement commanded the largest medium of inciteful information dissemination through the broadcast of Radio Biafra (an online radio used in disseminating inciteful hate speeches against the Nigerian government by Nnamdi Kanu) and it also received the highest mass mobilization, separatist radicalization, sympathy, membership and attraction, both locally and internationally.

The inciting utterances and scathing criticisms of Nnamdi Kanu obviously made the Buhari administration uncomfortable leading to Kanu's arrest on 14 October, 2015 on charges of sedition, ethnic incitement, terrorism and treasonable felony which was followed by massive protests and marches by members of IPOB (Nwangwu, 2023). This action by the Federal Government led the way for further crackdowns on the organization and paradoxically, the intensification of its separatist quest. This is evident in its acts and pronouncements.

Legitimacy crisis of South-East Governments

As has been indicated elsewhere in this paper, the resurgence of neo-Biafra separatist movements, IPOB inclusive, can be explained by the perceived marginalization and victimization of the Igbos by successive Nigerian governments. For IPOB in particular, it can be argued that the legitimacy crisis faced by the governments in the South-East has further encouraged its separatist activities and entrenchment as an influential actor in the region. The governments in the South-East have performed poorly in all indices

of good governance. As Oparaku, Nwaneri and Egbe (2017, p.46) observed, “aside the neglect by the Federal Government, the fortunes of the zone have over the years plummeted by the poor governance foisted on it by its so-called political leaders in the various states”.

A key manifestation of bad governance in the region is the lack of openness and transparency in governments' activities and transactions (Ilo, 2015). This trend according to Ilo (2015) mystifies resource management and erroneously presents government as acting 'in favour' of its people and distorts the time-honoured definition of democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people because it is erroneously believed that the governments carry the people along in their processes and decisions. Coupled with this is the level of corruption and misappropriation of public funds meant for the development of the states. The allocations from the centre to the states in the region have been diverted to the private pockets of the political leaders and their cronies, leaving the region underdeveloped and its people poor (Oparaku, Nwaneri and Egbe, 2017, p.46). There is also the case of rising youth unemployment and insecurity which the governments have failed to tackle decisively. A communique issued by the South-East summit (2011) cited in Ukiwo (2012, p.2-3) captures the state of affairs in the region when it stated that,

The South-East has been afflicted by a group of political leaders who are mostly opportunistic, self-serving and lacking in vision for the public good... In most parts of the region, elections have become organized crime in which political actors deploy violence, bribery and subterfuge to hijack state power for the sole purpose of diverting public treasuries to satisfy personal ends. This creates an environment in which governments are neither accountable nor responsive to the aspirations of the people.

Given the weak performance profile of the governments in the region which “manifests in their inability to provide the proverbial common good” (Ogundiya, 2009, p.129), people have lost faith in them and this has engendered the crisis of legitimacy faced by the governments. The crisis of legitimacy has helped in no small measure to give IPOB the influence and clout it currently commands in the region.

IPOB'S Acts and Implications for the Political Authority of Governments in the South-East

In a bid to pursue its separatist agenda, IPOB has engaged in acts and made pronouncements that have clothed it with the toga of a de facto political authority. Prominent among these acts and pronouncements are the declarations of Biafra Remembrance Day, sit-at-home directives and the establishment of the Eastern Security Network (ESN). Evidently, these acts and pronouncements have posed a challenge to and indeed threatened the political authority of governments in the region. The sit-at-home directives by IPOB perhaps represent the most glaring demonstration of its reach and influence within the South-East and also an affirmation of its status as a de facto political authority. Their origins are traced to the organization's directive to residents of the South-East to stay indoors on 30 May, 2016 in commemoration of the declaration of Biafra Republic and remembrance of her soldiers who died in the civil war (Jacob et al., 2020). Similar directive was to be issued for the 30 May, 2017 event which coincided with the 50 years of declaration of the Republic of Biafra (Punch, 1 April, 2021). In the words of the organization's spokesman, Emma Powerful, “There will be no movement in Biafra land, both human and vehicular. Biafra land will be shut down completely as a mark of dignified respect to those that sacrificed their lives for us”.

Subsequent sit-at-home directives were to follow suit. For instance, preparatory to the 18 November, 2017 governorship election in Anambra State, the organization had directed the indigenes to boycott it (Nwangwu, 2023). However, by far the most impactful of IPOB'S sit-at-home directives is that ordered in August, 2021 to be observed on Mondays as a protest to the re-arrest of its leader, this time in

Kenya, on 27 June, 2021 by the security operatives of the Nigerian state. The directive was also extended to the days Kanu is to appear in court.

Although the directives met with occasional non-compliance, generally speaking, there has been high level of compliance by the Southeasterners (Punch, 9 August, 2021; *The Guardian*, 12 October, 2021). The Monday sit-at-home directives have seen the forced closure of public and private institutions, markets, businesses, educational institutions and also the restriction on both human and vehicular traffic. Two reasons account for this high level of compliance. To many young Igbos especially the youths and those in the underclass category, Nnamdi Kanu and his IPOB have a messianic mission to liberate the Igbos from the perceived marginalization by the Nigerian state. Thus, complying with the sit-at-home directives is their own way of showing solidarity with what IPOB and its leader stand for (Punch, September 19, 2021). On the other hand, there are others who comply with the directives for fear of violence being unleashed on them by the supporters of IPOB who would readily see them as saboteurs in the event of their non-compliance (Daily Post, September 6, 2021; *The Guardian*, 12 October, 2021). Even the directives by the organization are most times accompanied by threats of violence to ensure compliance. This was the case for instance with the IPOB-ordered boycott of the 18 November, 2017 Anambra governorship election (Sahara Reporters, November 11, 2017). Notably, the governments in the South-East except that of Anambra state of recent, have in the face of these directives, shown incapacity to counter the growing influence and clout of IPOB. Notwithstanding the fact that IPOB in April, 2023, announced the suspension of the Monday sit-at-home (*The Guardian*, 12 April, 2023), there are still pockets of compliance in the region. For instance, the courts in Imo State still do not sit on Mondays ostensibly for fear of attacks by hoodlums.

The ESN set up by IPOB on 12 December, 2020 is a child of necessity and circumstance (*The Guardian*, 16 December, 2020). In providing the reason for establishing the paramilitary outfit, IPOB'S leader, Kanu, stated that the failure of South-East governors to secure the lives and property of Igbo people led to its formation (*The Guardian*, 16 December, 2020). He added that, "For years, our mothers have not been able to go to their farms for fear of being raped and cut into pieces. Our invaders, some of them from Sene-Gambia are in our villages raping and killing people at will... We present our first and last line of defence, the Eastern Security Network to end years of terrorism in our land." According to Osae-Brown and Alake (2021) as cited in Nwangwu (2023), the ESN was formed with the aim of protecting the oil-rich South-East region against incursions by ethnic Fulani herders accused of grazing on farmlands and committing crimes against the locals. Significantly, the birthing of the ESN changed IPOB'S separatist agitation from a non-violent one to an armed struggle (Nwangwu, 2023).

One of the cardinal functions of governments is the protection of lives and property. This means that securing the lives and property of citizens is a solemn obligation of the state through its agent, the government. But given the failure of the governments in the South-East to tackle insecurity in the region, IPOB through the ESN, capitalized on this failure to fill the lacuna. A measure of ESN's influence in the region was when in January, 2021, it gave the governors of the South-East 14 days ultimatum to ban open grazing, threatening to deploy its operatives to enforce a ban if the authorities did not comply (*The Nation*, 30 January, 2021, as cited in Wikipedia, 2023c). The ESN before the expiration of the ultimatum, raided a Fulani camp in Isiukwuato in Abia State and in the process, killed their livestock and burnt down their houses. This action of ESN compelled the governors to announce the banning of open grazing (Daily Post, 1 February, 2021). Nothing could have been more evident of the ESN's challenge to the political authority of the governments.

There are implications of the foregoing acts and pronouncements of IPOB for the political authority of governments in the South-East. In the first place, the nature of the acts and pronouncements of IPOB demonstrates the existence of a parallel political authority to that of the governments in the region which

constitutes a serious threat to them. The existence of a parallel authority means that the state governments are not in effective charge of the political spaces of their respective states. Because of the deleterious impact of IPOB's sit-at-home directives on their political authority, the governments strenuously try to impress the public that they are in charge by issuing counter directives (The Guardian, 9 August, 2021; Daily Post, 28 May, 2021). Thus, where the people are supposed to obey directives issued only by their governments, they are faced with the challenge of equally complying with the ones issued by IPOB acting in its de facto capacity.

The habitual compliance of people in the region to IPOB's directives is a strong indication of loss of faith and confidence in the governments in the region owing to their weak performance and inability to provide the common good. The consequent legitimacy crisis has made the people question the right and competence of the governments to issue directives that must be complied with. The legitimacy crisis has also provided the fertile ground for the emergence of a non-state actor in the mould of IPOB to challenge the political authority of governments in the region. What the foregoing points to is the fact that the right to exercise effective political authority is earned by effective governmental performance and vice versa.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated the implications of IPOB's acts and pronouncements for the political authority of governments in the South-East of Nigeria. IPOB emerged to continue with the unfinished project of the Uwazuruike-led MASSOB and others, which is for an independent Biafran state the agitation for which was fueled by the perceived Igbo marginalization, exclusion and victimization by the Nigerian state. The organization's ascendancy has also been aided by the legitimacy crisis faced by the governments in the South-East in addition to its capacity to use veiled as well as open threats to enforce its directives. This helped to establish it as a force to reckon with not only in the South-East but beyond. Remarkably, IPOB more than others before it, has taken the separatist agitation to a radical new height. In a bid to actualize its goal, it has engaged in acts and made pronouncements such as the declaration of Biafra Remembrance Day, sit-at-home directives and the establishment of the ESN. It has been argued in this paper that the acts and pronouncements of IPOB have not only given it the toga of a de facto political authority, but has also challenged and even threatened the political authority of governments in the South-East. The implications of these acts are shown by the existence of a parallel political authority represented by IPOB issuing directives and orders in its de facto capacity, alongside governments in the region who exercise de jure political authority. Also, the compliance of the people in the region to IPOB's directives is indicative of the fact that they have lost faith and confidence in the governments in the region. This loss of faith has been engendered by the weak performance of these governments and their inability to provide the proverbial common good. The resultant crisis of legitimacy has provided the fertile ground for the emergence of IPOB to challenge the political authority of governments in the region. It is thus evident that effective exercise of political authority is hinged on governmental performance.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made.

1. The governments in the South-East should make governance to be people-centered with a view to shoring up their legitimacy crisis.
2. Governments in the region should desist from their confrontational posture towards IPOB and seek ways to engage them for constructive dialogue on how to address the perceived marginalization of the South-East in Nigeria.
3. Governments in the region, notwithstanding party affiliations, must speak with one voice on issues pertaining to the interests of the South-East and work for the protection of such interests.

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